

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Samuel Lindley

Samuel Lindley was born February 8, 1915, and grew up in Kokomo, Indiana. His mother, Bertha Mendenhall Lindley, was a birthright Quaker; his father, Edward Lindley, was a school principal.

The fourth of eight children, Samuel Lindley was the first of his siblings to attend public school. He attended the Quaker school Earlham College for three years and studied science. As a senior, he came to the University of Hawai'i to study philosophy in 1935. He graduated the following year and began teaching at 'Iolani School. After a year he was asked to leave for dating a Chinese woman.

In 1938, he married Marion Wong in the first Quaker wedding in Hawai'i. He then taught at Moloka'i High School, but after a year he returned to the Mainland to study at Yale University.

When he returned to Hawai'i in 1940, he lived in Ann Satterthwaite's home, which became a Quaker meeting house. During the war he was a pacifist and advised conscientious objectors.

After the war he returned to the Mainland and continued his studies and taught at colleges on the East Coast.

In 1965, he retired and moved his family back to Hawai'i while he studied abroad for a year. When he joined them in Hawai'i he went to library school and became a librarian at Honolulu Community College. He was widowed in 1980 and retired as a librarian. He has five daughters and continues to study and take classes.

Tape No. 22-8-1-92

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Sam Lindley (SL)

February 12, 1992

Mānoa, O'ahu

BY: Joe Rossi (JR)

JR: This is an interview with Sam Lindley on February 12, 1992, in his Mānoa home. The interviewer is Joe Rossi.

Mr. Lindley, to begin with, maybe you could start by telling me about your parents and where they're from.

SL: Yes. My father and mother were both brought up in Howard County, Greentown, Indiana. It's about ten miles east of Kokomo. And my father was a schoolteacher and a school principal—elementary school principal. He didn't have a college degree. In those days it wasn't required. He had gone to Indiana University for a year and then became a teacher. My mother also taught for a couple years before she started having a family. And they were married in, what, 1907 or something like that, and went off for a year to Oklahoma—the pioneer days, it seemed like—and came back to Indiana. They had my first sister in 1909. She's still living there in the area around Greentown. And she's eighty-two now, eighty-three in August. And then we lived in a small town called Plevna, which is nothing but a crossroads country town, until I was three-and-a-half, and at that time moved to Kokomo, the county seat. And he became principal of an elementary school in north Kokomo. So I grew up there in Kokomo, went to public schools.

I know a little story that you might be interested in. My older brothers and sisters went to the Seventh-Day Adventist school, private school. And when I was five years old and ready to go to elementary school, my brothers and sisters said, "If you go to a public school, you can't get to heaven." That worried me a great deal. But I asked my mother if I went to public school could I go to heaven. She said she thought I probably could.

(Laughter)

SL: So I was the first one to go to public school.

JR: So are you the youngest?

SL: I'm only number four in a family of eight.

JR: And how many boys and girls?

SL: There are five boys and three girls. We had one oldest daughter and then five boys straight and then two younger daughters. They're all living around in Kokomo, Indiana now. I'm the only one who ventured away.

JR: Are all eight still living?

SL: No, two brothers have died. One older than I, and one younger than I.

JR: And what date were you born?

SL: I was born February 8, 1915. I had just had a birthday on Saturday.

JR: Oh, happy birthday.

(Laughter)

SL: I just came from a birthday party at a Chinese restaurant. My first wife's sisters [and] brother—there were three sisters and one brother who came to celebrate with me (Robert Wong, Peggy Lee, Phyllis Nakamura, and Olive Silva).

JR: Oh, that was nice.

SL: Yeah.

JR: What were your parents' names?

SL: My mother's name was Bertha Mendenhall. She was a birthright Quaker, and my mother's parents always spoke to us in the plain language, the Quaker language with the thee and thou. And so I had exposure to Quakerism that way. My father was Edward S. Lindley. The same name I have—I have Samuel Edward. He was born Samuel Edward, but he didn't like it so he changed it around and called himself Edward Samuel and gave me the Samuel Edward.

(Laughter)

SL: I don't know why. Anyway, then when I graduated from high school, I looked around for a college to go to, various colleges. And my mother just casually mentioned, "Why don't you go to Earlham," a Quaker college. Never thought of it. I applied to Earlham [College] and was accepted. I could have gone to Indiana [University] much cheaper—half the price it cost to go to Earlham—but I thought I needed private college at that time. And it helped me a lot, because small, individual attention and all. I majored in physics and math in college.

JR: So you had gone to public school up till your college . . .

SL: Through high school.

JR: And then . . .

SL: And then off to a private college, Earlham College, a Quaker college. And then I switched majors sort of. After three years at Earlham, I wanted to major in philosophy, because the philosophy man there was so good. He was a Quaker, Thomas Kelly. And in my senior year he came to the University of Hawai'i to teach philosophy. We were standing together in a latrine one day, and he said, "Sam, why don't you come to Honolulu with me?"

And I said, "That's just what I'm going to do." So I wrote and applied to the university for an exchange scholarship, and they arranged it so that somebody from here went to Earlham and I came here, tuition free, and board and room—not board, just a room at Atherton [House]. So that was my great adventure, because I'd never been out of Indiana practically. And to come across all this ocean and continent. . . .

JR: Had you read about Hawai'i or heard anything about Hawai'i?

SL: No, I didn't know anything.

JR: It was the frontier (chuckles) or something near that?

SL: It was 1935, and it wasn't even a very well-known tourist place at that time. So I left Kokomo, Indiana one day, practically without saying goodbye. I said I was going to visit a friend in Indiana and stood out on the road to hitchhike to Greenville. And a car came along and stopped and said, "Where are you going?"

They said they were going to Los Angeles, so I said, "I'm going to Los Angeles."

(Laughter)

SL: And they took me all the way to Los Angeles . . .

JR: Really?

SL: . . . from Kokomo. Two-and-a-half days, traveling day and night, and I drove part of the way.

JR: So the family didn't know you were leaving?

SL: They didn't really expect me to leave, but . . .

JR: Was it okay, though?

SL: . . . I was all set to come. But I was a little early. And when I got to Los Angeles, I only had—I gave ten dollars for the ride to Los Angeles, to help with the gas.

(Laughter)

SL: And then I got to look for a boat to come to Honolulu. And I found out I didn't have enough money to pay for the boat ticket. So I decided I'd better just stow away on a boat. I got onto a freighter going to Honolulu, but I was discovered and they very kindly told me that nobody

can make it to Honolulu. They always transfer you at sea, take you back and put you in jail. So I gave up that idea and looked around. And there was this sailboat being outfitted to bring live bait from West Coast to Honolulu for the tuna packers. And so I arranged with the mate to take me on as sort of a volunteer crewman and sailed across. I had to wait for them to finish outfitting the boat, so by the time they got—took two weeks to get the bait and two weeks to cross. I came here late. I came to Hawai'i Hall, and Tom Kelly, my philosophy professor, greeted me there and says, "Oh, you smell like bilge water."

(Laughter)

SL: Took me Downtown to outfit me with some new clothes, and then he took me up to the Pali. And in San Pedro I talked to some seamen and they said, "Oh, Honolulu is a terrible place. You wouldn't want to be there." They were thinking of Hotel Street.

JR: Oh, (laughs) a nice guy like you.

SL: And what I saw was the Pali. And that was—I said, "This is the place for me."

JR: That must have been quite an adventure though, if you hadn't been outside of Indiana, to drive across the country coast to coast.

SL: And come cross the ocean by sailboat. And then there was this coastline. You couldn't imagine seeing Honolulu from the sailboat. You didn't see any high rises, only two hotels at Waikīkī, and all of the houses hidden behind palm trees and things like that. So, really a romantic place.

JR: What did you have with you when you came? What were you actually—I mean, did you have a suitcase, did you have books, did you have money?

SL: I just had eighty dollars. And when I got here the crew chipped in ten dollars as bonus for working my way across. So I ended up with just what I started with, eighty dollars. And of course, I had my tuition paid for here, in exchange. So although I came a week late, I got right into the exchange program. The university at that time was making the exchange students feel very much at home, with socials and things, so we fitted in quite well. Only 1,500 students altogether at the university.

I had a room at Atherton House provided. But after a month I felt I was out of place in such a fancy place. And one of the Japanese exchange [students] who had been an exchange student the previous year, Seido Ogawa, invited me to come to his house and live with him. For fifteen dollars a month I could get board and room, whereas the food at Atherton House would cost me thirty dollars a month. I was saving money by moving out, so I did.

I had to take quite a number of required courses because the (science) major at the University of Hawai'i didn't quite fit in with my major in Earlham, so I worked pretty hard. And students here were really much better than Earlham students.

JR: Oh, really?

SL: Oh yeah, hardworking and all. And Japanese and Chinese students were very industrious, so I felt a little bit in competition. The second semester I took two courses in religion, and there I met a Chinese girl. I heard her give a book review which was just very impressive. And so I asked her to show me the notes that she had taken for the week that I had missed, and then that started us off and we got married later.

(Laughter)

JR: Had you been near many—I guess I'm thinking of Indiana. I don't know what the racial mix was there. It must have been very different coming to Hawai'i.

SL: Oh, quite. I hadn't experienced anything like it. We had one or two Japanese students who came to Earlham from Japan. But they were not like anything here in Hawai'i. I liked the Oriental students, and even before I met Marion, in the first semester, I told somebody—Iwalani Smith, who lives on Maui now—I said, "I'm going to marry a Chinese girl." I didn't know who, but . . .

(Laughter)

SL: That was before I even knew I was going to. Anyway, I had seen Marion acting in a play at the university and she was so brilliant. So I thought that was nice, and one day I saw her coming through the lunch line and I tried to see if I can get her to come and eat lunch with me. And sure enough, she sat down and had lunch at the table with me. Well, at graduation she was given a chance to go to China for a year to study at Lingnan University, a scholarship. And her sister, younger sister, had already gone to China to study at Yenching University. And this was a dream Marion had always had, to study in China, so she couldn't give up that idea. But there was one requirement that she had to face, that if she went she must not be engaged to marry. So she broke off the engagement so that she could go to China.

But I went to teach at 'Iolani School after graduation.

JR: Let me just interrupt. You graduated in what year?

SL: Nineteen thirty-six.

JR: Thirty-six, okay.

SL: And then I started teaching at 'Iolani [School] in '36. And she came back after a year, and we got together again. The headmaster at 'Iolani School was Albert Stone, a missionary in China for ten years. He said, "I hear you're going with a Chinese girl, and we can't allow that because it sets a bad example for our boys."

And so I said, "Well, I just have to quit."

And he said, "You're under contract and you'll have to pay the expenses for hiring another substitute in your place."

So I said, "It's all right." So then I went back to the university for the second semester to get my teaching certificate, because I hadn't a teaching certificate for secondary teaching in Hawai'i. And so after a semester and a summer I got my teaching certificate and we could be placed in public schools. But we couldn't be placed on the same island unless we were married. So during Easter vacation 1938, she was teaching on Moloka'i and we got married. First Quaker wedding in Hawai'i.

If you want to hear more about the Quaker meeting then—it had started, when Tom Kelly was here in 1935, to meet once a month. And I met with the first meeting that ever was in Hawai'i, in 1935.

JR: What can you tell me about that meeting?

SL: It was held at the Church of the Crossroads. Reverend Galen Weaver was friendly and joined in with us at our meetings every month when we met there. There were about a dozen or fifteen people. One was a Zen Buddhist who liked to meditate, a Japanese Zen Buddhist who was a head of some Zen place here in Hawai'i. And one was a retired Presbyterian minister who had taught at (Union Theological Seminary in) New York, Dr. G. A. Johnston Ross. And it just happened that Marion was his protege. And so she came to that meeting with him, and I just noticed at the time that she was with him.

JR: You two hadn't . . .

SL: . . . hadn't met before, but that was the first time I saw her.

JR: Was she a Quaker or was she just interested?

SL: No, she just came because of (Dr.) Ross's interest. He was not a Quaker and never could be, but he was the one who then arranged for her to get the scholarship to study in China, because he didn't want her to marry a *Haole*.

(Laughter)

SL: And so he was the one who made the condition that she be unengaged when she left for China. He figured she'd meet some Chinese there and everything would be settled. (He died during the year she was away in China, "of a broken heart.")

JR: Was she . . .

SL: Born here.

JR: Born here.

SL: Her parents---her father was born here too; mother had come from south China. And her mother went back to her home village there near Canton, with Marion's help. Father worked at American Factors, but didn't have any extra money. So Marion gave some of her money to her mother to go back to her village and to meet her father and mother again. And so, it wasn't so far from Lingnan that she couldn't take off a weekend and go to visit the family

village near Canton.

JR: Did the meeting become organized after that first . . .

SL: Yes.

JR: . . . session?

SL: In a way. We were just kind of a what they call a preparative meeting. Didn't belong to any yearly meeting until ten years later when the Pacific Yearly Meeting was set up. So during that ten years' preparation we belonged to a kind of Friend's World Committee, which took in individual meetings like ours, to oversee them. But quite a very good meeting. It was under the leadership of Catharine Cox, who had—her parents had come to Hawai'i as missionaries back in 1854. And she was born here and went to Bryn Mawr [College]. She was in the first graduating class of Bryn Mawr, I think. And her husband was a school principal here, Isaac Cox. And so she was the mother of our group. But Tom Kelly was here that year, and the head of the School of Religion (Dr. Walter Homan) was a Quaker, and several old ladies came. So it was an interesting little group. Then when Marion and I were married, we were married under the care of the meeting, for the first Quaker wedding, but there was no legal recognition of Quaker weddings, you see. In Quaker [weddings], Quakers marry each other. There's no minister supposedly. And we say our vows to each other with the idea that there's no priest to make you married, you're married. And in order to make it legal, we just had Galen Weaver sign the papers, because he was with us.

JR: Where did it take place?

SL: At the Church of the Crossroads. And Mrs. (Caroline) Ross gave us a big reception there at the church.

JR: What was the date of the first Quaker wedding of Hawai'i?

SL: It was April 9, 1938. I have the wedding certificate. We have a large certificate which everybody signs as witnesses to the marriage. I have it here.

JR: How many people were there?

SL: I think it must be around forty-five. And some of the outstanding people came, like Mrs. Theodore Richards. And of course, Mrs. Ross was the one who'd have influenced that.

JR: Just an estimate, how many Quakers were living here that you can remember back then?

SL: Were living in Hawai'i then?

JR: Yeah.

SL: I would think a dozen. Interesting thing happened about the year I was in the university. Tom Kelly and I were invited up to Pacific Heights to a very wealthy Quaker, what we call a Philadelphia Quaker. Elkinton, that's a rich Quaker family name which you would recognize.

(Alfred) Elkinton, and he loved boats. He told us a story of his boats, how he had built several boats. And then I found out later that he had told Tom Kelly he would like to help me through the university, if I had just catered to him a little more.

(Laughter)

SL: But I didn't feel like catering to him. Instead, I arranged a loan from Theodore Richards, who was helping students like me get through school by giving interest-free loans. So I borrowed the money from him instead. Paid it back after I got to teach.

JR: How was the university community at that time? You mentioned, what, about 1,500 . . .

SL: Total 1,500 students. It was entirely within that quadrangle, Gartley Hall and. . . .

JR: Hawai'i Hall.

SL: Hawai'i Hall. And very close knit, especially because I was an exchange student. I was given special privileges among the students. They had socials for us.

JR: Were there many exchange students?

SL: About a dozen. Marjorie Sinclair was one. She married the president of the university [Gregg Sinclair].

JR: Yeah.

SL: She's still here. So exchange students had, among themselves, a very close relationship. And you got to know almost all the students that way. My professor, (Thomas) Kelly, didn't feel very comfortable here among the—he felt that the standards at the university were not up to his standard. He wanted to be East Coast . . .

JR: I thought you said it was a little difficult.

SL: I did. For me it was, but he felt that—of course, you see, the Oriental students are very keen about memorizing the answers to exams and give it back word for word. But what he was looking for was more open discussion, a different kind of classroom activity. And during that year he got very ill and so he felt that the health problems here were too much. And he was invited then to go teach philosophy at Haverford College, a Quaker college near Philadelphia, so he went back.

JR: So you lost your mentor.

SL: Yeah. But I had the chance then to stay on and study Oriental philosophies at the—what was coming to be the East-West Center, but not yet. Gregg Sinclair though, who hadn't yet become president of the university, was starting the (Oriental Institute) and was inviting important philosophers from the Orient to come here to teach. And I took classes with them, studied Chinese and Japanese language and Chinese and Japanese philosophy.

JR: Were there many *Haoles*, so to speak, taking that kind of courses?

SL: Not many. One who's still around, Robert Aitken, is a well-known Zen Buddhist. He and I were about the only graduate students in philosophy. But actually, I had to work. After teaching at 'Iolani I began working here and there—Royal Hawaiian Hotel night auditor, then I went to work at the Army-Navy Y [Young Men's Christian Association], and then I went to work at the Bishop Bank, which is First Hawaiian Bank now. Then I bought a house in Nu'uaniu, a nice house on Park Street, just behind Queen Emma's (Summer Palace). And that's where we were living when my first daughter was born. And at the same time, I bought a lot up here in Mānoa Valley. First I got an acre and three-quarters of old taro land, and then I bought an acre adjoining that, which got me connected to the street, which I didn't have before. I built this little shack, and we were living in that during the war.

JR: Now, you were on Moloka'i before . . .

SL: That was---yeah, before the war. But go back, go back . . .

JR: Yeah, I just want to make sure I have it straight.

SL: In 1938 I got married, and I got my teacher's certificate and went to teach at Moloka'i High. I taught for a year only, and then we thought, this is our chance to go away to study philosophy at Yale. So we both went to Yale University. I studied philosophy in the graduate school. My wife went to the seminary, Yale Theological Seminary, for religion. And while we were there the war became threatening, as if we were moving closer and closer to war. And so I said, "Let's go back to be among friends so I can establish myself as a CO [conscientious objector]." So after a summer at Pendle Hill, which is a Quaker retreat center, sort of, near Philadelphia, we came back here.

JR: Is that when you started buying the property and that?

SL: Yeah, that's right. That's when I came back and started buying property. I saw this land for sale in Mānoa Valley. Oh, I couldn't pass that up. But didn't have any way to build on it, so I bought the house in Nu'uaniu, but never felt quite right about it. So we moved back to Mānoa and rented (out) the house in Nu'uaniu during the war. Sold it after the war to the renters. We shouldn't have done it. (Chuckles)

JR: Where exactly in Mānoa, if you can describe it for . . .

SL: Yeah. It's above Lowrey [Avenue], just a few hundred feet—not even, about a hundred and fifty feet. You could go in one of the side streets and walk through a little path and get to our place. But there was no official connection to the street, so that's why I had to buy the acre to get my right-of-way (to) the street.

JR: And you were telling me that's where Mānoa Elementary, the park around there, is today . . .

SL: Right. There was no elementary school there. Where the elementary school is was all flower garden. It was leased by a Japanese man to grow flowers. And mine was just between (what

is now) Mānoa Elementary and Lowrey Avenue, a long, narrow strip.

JR: Were you planning on growing anything there, or were you . . .

SL: Yeah. I grew some lettuce and gave it to the poor people during the war. But mostly I had goats. I raised goats, because they could eat the grass. But I had to work, in addition, to earn money to live on.

JR: You mentioned the war. I wonder if, to sort of set the stage, you could tell me what life was like immediately preceding the war. You had returned from . . .

SL: I returned from Yale and lived, actually, the rest of 1940 right near the university at a Quaker—where the Quakers had started meeting, at the home of Ann Satterthwaite. Ann Satterthwaite had been executive secretary of the Pan-Pacific Union till it was closed down. She bought a house at 1951 Vancouver Drive, just a block from the university, invited me to come and live there in the basement. And I went to university classes and studied Japanese, Chinese language. And so for part-time work I was at the reserve room in the library at the university. Even when I moved up the valley, I could ride the bicycle down and do my part-time work at the university library. I enjoyed that so much. Well, what is was like here in Hawai'i. . . .

(Pause)

It was pretty much simple, I guess. My life was simple anyway. I tried to keep it simple. The war was going off in Europe and seemed kind of far away for us. Never expected it to come this close.

JR: When you returned from Yale to Hawai'i, did you feel like you were distancing yourself from the war?

SL: Yes.

(Laughter)

SL: That was part of the idea. But I had to go through the steps of preparing to become a conscientious objector when the draft came out.

JR: What are those steps?

SL: You had to establish your conscientious objection. Actually, it was not so hard, because Quakers were one of the three peace groups who were more or less automatically granted conscientious objection. My friends were granted conscientious objection status, but when I applied I was already starting a family, so I was given a different status of "pre-Pearl Harbor father."

JR: Why didn't they just give you the CO status?

SL: They didn't want to have so many COs in Hawai'i. They didn't want---this is sort of military.

The military was in control of Hawai'i. The military had a stranglehold on the economy of the islands at that time. And so they didn't want [Hawai'i to have] the name of having a lot of COs. Anything they could do to give us a different classification they did. Two of my friends were classified as COs and sent to the Big Island to do work with Hawai'i National Park.

JR: Are these fellow Quakers?

SL: Yes.

JR: When did you have to apply for this? This was after Pearl Harbor, I would assume.

SL: I'm not sure, but I had to be (laughs) granted that status. But it was right along that same time that we were—let's see, my friends were called up in 1942 I think. So I also was working to consult with other people who wanted to become COs.

JR: People who were not Quakers.

SL: That's right. Give advice—you're not supposed to advise them.

(Laughter)

SL: But just to tell them the alternatives.

JR: Are these people that came to you?

SL: Yeah, to the Quakers.

JR: Now, were there public meetings that people could come to or . . .

SL: No, just private.

JR: And these people sought you out.

SL: Sought out the Quaker meeting, and I was one of those who helped to advise. Now, I must tell you, the main thing that happened as far as the Quakers were concerned is that with Pearl Harbor attacked, all the Japanese aliens were segregated and their property was taken over. And so Gilbert Bowles, who had been in Japan for forty years as a Quaker missionary, knew the language well, was right on the spot. He came in 1940 and was able to visit the people (whose life) had become economically difficult—in difficulties because of the war. He would try to help them get help from other agencies, which they, not knowing English, were not able themselves to do. And so lots of people felt that they owed him this, the help that he had brought to them during those years, difficult years.

JR: Now, the people who were coming to you for the CO status, they weren't necessarily Japanese though.

SL: No. See, the Japanese---all my friends who were Japanese [American] volunteered to form the 442nd [Regimental Combat Team].

JR: Sure, sure.

SL: And because there were so many volunteers, they filled up the draft requirements, and that meant that nobody else was called up. And part of the reasoning there, they said, was that Hawai'i—everybody who works here—is helping with the military. I didn't like that idea . . .

(Laughter)

SL: . . . to be helping the military. And I did begin to realize it, though, when I was working in the bank and all these people who were working at Pearl Harbor would come in and cash their checks at my window. And I thought, I'm just a paymaster for the government!

(Laughter)

SL: And so I gave that up after a while.

JR: I'm going to stop just for a second to turn the tape over.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

SL: My Quakerism is more on the line of meditation, not so much action. But many Quakers are on the other side. They feel that the action is the most important part of Quakerism. So we balanced each other off. Some emphasize action, some emphasize meditation. So during the war we brought out a CO from Philadelphia named William Maier to take charge of the [American Friends] Service Committee work. And he was about forty years old and single. And so he set up an office at the YWCA [Young Women's Christian Association], as headquarters for the work of the Service Committee. And Gilbert Bowles went there to work, as his headquarters, and from there he went out to visit the Japanese. And his daughter-in-law, Jane Bowles, was—I guess you'd call it executive secretary of the Service Committee at that time. And these guys were working in the office too.

My life, I felt, was hard enough. I had barely enough to live on so I wasn't contributing to the Service Committee work. And they felt—both Gilbert Bowles and William Maier—that all the Quakers should be giving at least something every month to the . . .

JR: Money you're talking about.

SL: Money, to the office. So one day they invited me to lunch at the YWCA restaurant there, and I thought, "Oh, must be something nice."

(Laughter)

SL: What they were doing then was trying to tell me that I had an obligation to pay money to the Service Committee. So I said I'd think about it, and found out after the luncheon that I was

supposed to pay for my own meal, too.

(Laughter)

SL: Right now, you see, the Service Committee has an office right next to the meeting house here on O'ahu Avenue. We built that just for the Service Committee, and it's one of the rather unique situations where the AFSC—that's the American Friends Service Committee—and the Quaker meeting are so well connected. And I'm one of the executive committee on the AFSC now. First time I've ever been that close. But a number of people from the meeting are on the executive committee, so that there's a close interrelationship which doesn't exist in any other part of the country practically. Because AFSC is not essentially Quaker, it's more an outlet for just anybody to take active part in service to the needy around the world. So we have a thrift shop, which is now open on Saturdays, to sell things that have been donated. And we have a festival in October every year, and we raise usually about \$12,000 a year to help support the Service Committee work. So I feel that we're doing something, at least, to help with the Service Committee.

Now, they [AFSC] feel that they have started up since—that this is their twenty-fifth year operating as an adjunct to the Pasadena office of the Service Committee. So they date their activities from. . . .Twenty-five years ago, it would be '67, would it?

JR: Yeah, yeah.

SL: And forget all about what went on during the war, which, to me, was. . . .

JR: That was the William Maier . . .

SL: William Maier. His name is spelled M-A-I-E-R.

JR: Okay.

SL: And their work was mostly connected with the Japanese aliens during the war. And there's that little story of Red Mitchell going to help Gilbert Bowles help a woman cut a door into her bedroom so that she could rent that to make a living, because her husband had been taken for. . . .

JR: He had been interned?

SL: Interned.

JR: So this was a Japanese . . .

SL: Yeah, a Japanese alien woman.

JR: So that they were actually going out into the community and doing . . .

SL: Doing things like that, especially with help to the women whose husbands had been interned. And the lady who was head of the Japanese Buddhist temple here on Beretania Street by

Punahou School, she felt that she owed so much to Gilbert Bowles for his help, support to her during the war, that she gave him an award later for his services.

JR: Was her husband interned?

SL: Yes, because he was an alien too. This is a Buddhist sect. I forgot the name now.

JR: Was that the Shinshu Kyokai Mission?

SL: Yeah, right. I cannot remember the names.

JR: I had that written down. (Chuckles)

SL: Do you have her Japanese name too?

JR: No, I don't. I'm sorry, I don't. Maybe we should---well, was anybody expecting this to happen?

SL: The war, Pearl Harbor?

JR: Well, one that. I was speaking more specifically about the internment, but you can answer . . .

SL: Let me tell you something about that. A week before Pearl Harbor, I was Downtown. And I saw on the front of the railroad station [i.e., terminal for the O'ahu Railway and Land Company]—which is now, you know, Dillingham offices—they had set up machine guns. And instead of facing out to the ocean, as you might expect, they were facing the street, where they figured Japanese in Hawai'i might attack the railroad station. And also, there were machine guns set up in the tower of Kawaiaha'o Church. Where the clock is, there were machine guns facing along King Street, in case there was some kind of local insurrection, I suppose.

JR: Did you surmise that yourself, or were talking to someone and they . . .

SL: I saw these, and my own inference from the way they were set up [was] that they were expecting some kind of local Japanese uprising. And of course, there were lots of rumors. And the Japanese were suspect. In order to try to prove their loyalty to the United States, that's why the AJAs [Americans of Japanese ancestry] volunteered in such numbers. And of course, all the Japanese-language schools then were closed by the military. There was a blackout, and—what you call, nobody allowed on the streets?

JR: Curfew.

SL: Curfew.

JR: What were you doing on the seventh of December?

SL: I was working at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel as a night auditor, and in the meantime I would try to come up and work a little on the farm. But Red Mitchell and two other friends—

Quakers—were living there at that time and I was living up in Nu‘uanu, supposedly. I worked at night, so I had a room at the hotel for sleeping there whenever I wanted to. And I lived pretty royally I must say.

(Laughter)

SL: I went to work then that night.

JR: Was that the night of the sixth?

SL: Sixth, yeah. And nothing seemed to be out of place. It was Sunday morning then, and every Sunday morning for weeks and weeks the military had had practice with all kinds of bombs going off all around, boats at sea shelling. And you would think it was a war then. So when the Japanese airplanes were bombing Pearl Harbor, we just thought it's another exercise. Almost everybody did. But of course, people who had radios were warned to stay off the streets. But we had no radio.

JR: You were in Waikīkī at the time?

SL: I left work at eight o'clock, and the attack started at five minutes to eight, or 8:05 [A.M.] or something like that. Anyway, when I got out I saw over Pearl Harbor all these anti-aircraft shells going off. But of course, that was happening every Sunday morning. And so I came up to the valley and told the boys there, "I think we're being attacked." They just laughed.

(Laughter)

SL: Couldn't be. Just another practice. And so we went off to Quaker meeting, which was at Hanahau'oli School, right here in Makiki, and nobody else came but just four or five of us.

JR: How many normally would have been there?

SL: Oh, about fifteen or twenty. And so we didn't know quite what to make of it. But then we heard the neighbor boy, looking up at the sky, say, "Oh, that's one of ours." So we knew that there was an attack, and not just practice.

And so we talked about what should we be doing if there's a war going on. I said, "We should just go on doing what we've been doing, because that's the way we should live." So we got in my car and drove to Nu‘uanu, to go to my place there for Sunday lunch. We heard the newspapers calling out, "Pearl Harbor Attack."

JR: So you were prepared at that point to just keep doing what you had planned and . . .

SL: Yeah, right, right.

JR: . . . what happens . . .

SL: Yeah.

JR: Did you think there would be any kind of invasion or anything like that?

SL: Yes, yes. At that time there were rumors all over the place that the Japanese had landed on the North Shore and were advancing across the island. So I just had to adjust to the idea that we'd be living under a Japanese power. And I thought, I can live under that just as well as I can under a U.S. military. No difference, a military government.

JR: No fear that you might be imprisoned or anything like that?

SL: No. No, I didn't. Because I thought it'd be just like any other military government. Well, we had already seen the smoke coming up from Pearl Harbor and burning boats on the way across to Nu'uau. But the rumors turned out to be false. And we were living in this uncertainty until the Battle of Midway. And one night even---it was dark, and I was up feeding the goats and heard this airplane coming over. And then there was a blackout. All the lights in the city were off, except ours, which was a gasoline lantern. And I rushed down and threw a blanket over the lantern to get the light covered up right away, and then turned it off. But the blanket got a burn on it. That airplane dumped bombs in the mountains, harmlessly that time. It was only a single plane, about the time of the Midway attack. [The bombing actually took place on March 4, 1942; the Battle of Midway took place in June of that year.]

(I went back to work at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel on the night of December 7. It was completely blacked out and there was gunfire all night long with tracer bullets being fired out across the water at Waikiki in case of a possible landing by Japanese troops. And about midnight some men came into the hotel carrying a wounded man. He had been walking along the sidewalk at Ft. DeRussy when his hat blew off. When he reached inside the fence to retrieve his hat, a sentry shot him through the stomach.)

(The Royal Hawaiian Hotel was soon taken over by the military for offices, and I was transferred to the Moana Hotel. Then an air force pilot who was being honored as a hero for supposedly shooting down twenty-seven enemy planes—although only twenty-nine planes in all were later confirmed shot down that morning over Honolulu—was rewarded with a room and a girl at the Moana. I didn't approve of this practice, so I quit that job rather than be a party to it.)

(There was a lot of prostitution in Hawai'i during the war. I was working at the King-Smith branch of the Bishop Bank—now the First Hawaiian Bank—in Chinatown then and on days when a navy ship arrived you would see sailors lined up for several blocks waiting their turn. People here regarded prostitution as a kind of protection for the local girls. A large number of prostitutes were imported from the Mainland and brothels were allowed to open already in December, 1941.)

(It was big business. A madame would come to the bank every day and deposit several thousand dollars to her account. Also, a proprietor of a shooting gallery on Hotel Street who couldn't even sign his name would bring his daily take of several hundred dollars to me and say, "Count it for me, I don't know how much there is.")

(Right after Pearl Harbor all the U.S. currency in Hawai'i had to be exchanged for currency with the word Hawai'i printed across it in large letters, I suppose it was to prevent any

invading army from benefitting from the money.)

JR: So up till Midway, there was . . .

SL: There was uncertainty that we expected Japanese to come and try to take over Hawai'i. And they could have done so, because it took a long time before (the U.S.) could restore the planes and all that were destroyed.

JR: Were you following the progress very closely, with much interest?

SL: Yes, I think you couldn't escape it. You see, of course, all the Southeast Asia and the Pacific Islands and then the gradual advance of the American soldiers along to Iwo Jima. And at the Battle of Iwo Jima—at that time, the City and County of Honolulu decided that they would, after the war, make a park where my land was. And so I got my condemnation papers and I tried to fight it. I went to the hearing and said that they should have a park, but they should have a street across so that above the street they could have the park, (chuckles) which would let me have my land back. And so for some reason the newspaper picked that up and sent a reporter out and got my picture. And headlines on the front page of the [*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*] said, so-and-so "Fights for Shangri-la." And my friend, who was in the marines as a reporter, got this newspaper while he was fighting the Battle of Iwo Jima.

(Laughter)

SL: And he thought that was the funniest thing.

(Laughter)

SL: Here I was, fighting the battle of . . .

JR: Shangri-la.

(Laughter)

SL: For my Shangri-la. Anyway, I knew that I would have to give up my whole way of life there in the valley. And so I got so dispirited that I gave up the fight, because I knew that I was going to lose my mind if I kept at it. And so I just gave up and decided that I would take the money and go off to study philosophy at Cornell University.

JR: So was the war still . . .

SL: The war was still going on. I just thought that I could—because by then I had two children and I needed all the money I could get. So I sold the house in Nu'uano and raised some money to go off to Cornell after the war. But before that, I gave up my job at the bank and went to teach at Kamehameha School—girls' school—for a semester. Taught physics and math. But by then, you see, the war was over, 1945. And then almost everybody was heading back to the Mainland because they were now able to travel. They had been kept here because of no travel to the Mainland during the war, and so it just seemed like an outflow of all the young friends who I'd known. And we felt it was time to go. Red (Mitchell) joined us and

went back by boat. The boat hadn't yet been refitted. It was still outfitted for carrying soldiers with bunks tiered up. And we went back to Los Angeles, where his parents were at that time.

JR: If it's okay with you, I wanted to just ask a few more questions about what was happening during that period of the war. Now, you mentioned that they wanted you to try to help out a little bit more with financial contributions and that, but were you giving of your time in helping them with any of their . . .

SL: No, I didn't really, except for advising COs. I didn't feel that that kind of work was my type of Quakerism.

JR: Did the makeup of the group change at all as a result of the war?

SL: We had quite a number of servicemen come to our meeting. People who had been connected with Friends (i.e., Quakers) on the Mainland, who had been drafted into the army or navy—quite a number—and who wanted to be connected with our meeting during the war. One particularly, from Iowa, seemed like he had been able to make his adjustment to the military by taking a post as a postman in the service. So he felt that by delivering mail to the servicemen he was doing pacifist work. And so, he was a good friend. And then there was several navy people, and one of them asked to join the meeting. And there was quite a discussion whether we should accept a serviceman as a Quaker. We worked it out so that we decided that it was all right to accept him as a member of our local meeting. And at the same time, we had in our meeting a number of conservative people who were embarrassed by the pacifist stand of the Quakers. One particularly was an executive vice president of the Hawaiian Electric Company, and he didn't want the name of Quakers to be in any way painted red. And so he didn't want anything to do with pacifism. So he's no longer part of our meeting.

(Laughter)

JR: Well, from reading the newspapers and so forth, I get the feeling that there was a big patriotic surge here in Hawai'i, with victory gardens and "Buy war bonds" and all this kind of thing.

SL: Oh, yes. I didn't have anything to do with that, but that's true.

JR: Yeah. I'm wondering how the community related with the pacifist group and vice versa. I'm wondering what the interaction was, if any.

SL: We didn't go for that kind of patriotism exactly. As I had suggested, what I felt I could do was raise lettuce and give it to poor people to eat, which I did.

JR: But you weren't---the group wasn't the target of any. . . .

SL: Not so much at that time. Later we had some very active pacifists who would go out and stand at Pearl Harbor or Wheeler Field or someplace like that with a sign. But I didn't do much of that myself.

JR: Yeah, yeah.

- SL: I'm not conservative, I'm not too active liberally, but always felt that I'm sort of in-between.
- JR: I guess I'm trying to get from you, maybe if you weren't personally doing these things, what was happening.
- SL: Yeah. A lot of that was going on, victory gardens particularly.
- JR: But for instance, someone going out to Wheeler Field with a sign or whatever. Was that the kind of thing that was happening during the war years or are you talking much later?
- SL: Later. I think this community was almost totally in support of the war. Particularly, I think, because the young Japanese felt that they had to show their loyalty by being extra patriotic.
- JR: But you were still allowed to go about your—not you personally, but the organization was still allowed to have their beliefs . . .
- SL: Yes, right.
- JR: . . . and so forth without too much conflict between the two.
- SL: Yeah, no conflict. It was a military government, and your freedoms were restricted.
- JR: When I talked with you the last time you mentioned a strike for peace that had occurred back in the thirties that . . .
- SL: Nineteen thirty-five.
- JR: Maybe you could tell me about that.
- SL: (Chuckles) It was a national strike for peace. I felt that I wanted to take part in that, so I—a fellow exchange student and I led this strike, and called for all the students to walk out of their classes at eleven o'clock or something like that and meet near the gym, which was then where Sinclair Library is now.
- JR: Okay.
- SL: And so we had about 200 people turn out, I think. It was pretty good. And I had asked Galen Weaver if he would be the speaker, and he said no. Well, he said first yes, and then later he called me and said he thought he would want to stay in this community for a little while longer. Which meant, of course, that he was not secure in his job if he were to take part in a peace strike. It might mean that he would be driven out of his church. So I took over, and didn't make a very good speech, but the university—what do you call it? The army people?
- JR: The ROTC [Reserve Officers' Training Corps]?
- SL: The ROTC leaders decided to end the strike by taking the leaders and dumping them in the swimming pool. And so I was one. I was taken—dumped. The swimming pool was there where Hemenway [Hall] is now.

JR: Okay.

SL: So it was just nearby. And dunking in the swimming pool, throwing fruits and stuff at us, sort of ended the strike. But shortly after that, a man from a communist paper—the editor of a communist paper—came to me and said he would like an interview. And I think he thought that he could use me somehow. But after an interview, he realized that I was no use to him.

(Laughter)

SL: That was the end of that.

JR: I know, for instance, say, during Vietnam, that the university was sort of a hotbed of . . .

SL: Yeah, that was much more so.

JR: During your time there was nothing like . . .

SL: No, it was all very—Hawai'i was completely under the thumb of the military in those days. You didn't dare say anything against them, because that was where our bread and butter came from.

JR: There was something called sewing groups. What were those?

SL: The women of the meeting were quite active in preparing clothes, donated clothes. They would sew them up, and wash them, and pack them, and send them off to needy places in the world. They usually were able to get free transportation. Some boat people—Matson [Navigation Company] people—would deliver them free. So they packed up an enormous lot. I had nothing to do with that, of course, but the Quakers were. I think [that was] one of the big activities, about every week. They still have what they call a labor of love, meet once a week.

JR: During the war period did the meeting have an office?

SL: They had the Service Committee office at the YWCA, but also we arranged to rent the old university bookstore on the corner of [Metcalf Street] and University [Avenue]. We paid \$100 a month rent. It was just empty, but we had one of the young people who had married live in it so that they have something there. And Gilbert Bowles would say, "There's life there." He thought that life was so important, you know, that there was somebody living in that structure. And then we would meet with him on a weekday, at least once a week, and he would lead us in discussion about the Old Testament prophets. And that's one of the experiences that stand out in my life, to be able to see the Old Testament prophets through his eyes. He's a great scholar of the Old Testament. But we had it then as a kind of a center, and, of course, it was his dream always to have a location where we could have a home. And through his efforts primarily we were able finally to buy the house here on O'ahu Avenue. Before that we'd just been meeting in homes.

JR: Private homes.

SL: Private homes, Hanahau'oli School, and . . .

JR: Church of the Crossroads.

SL: Yeah. Mostly Ann Satterthwaite's house, because it was central.

JR: Which corner of [Metcalf] and University?

SL: It's where the Burger King is now.

JR: Okay, all right.

SL: And I think the bookstore structure is still part of that Burger King.

JR: Oh yeah?

SL: I think so. It's just a cement block building about what, maybe twenty by forty [feet] or something like that. Of course, the bookstore outgrew it. It had actually belonged to Bishop Estate, and the university had leased it from them. And then when the lease was up it became empty, and we thought that might make a good meeting house because of its location near the university. We always wanted to be near the university, and the nearest we could get was here on O'ahu Avenue, which wasn't quite what we'd hoped for but now it seems to be a pretty good location. Any closer, there's no parking.

(Laughter)

JR: I know at that place [i.e., AFSC headquarters on O'ahu Avenue], there's a sign out front. It's not very big, but it tells you what it is. Was there a similar sign at . . .

SL: No, no. We just knew that it was there. I have a picture of a group meeting there—outside there—at the wedding of this soldier I told you about who was a postmaster in the army, at his wedding, a small photograph of the group meeting there. I should show you some of the old pictures maybe.

JR: Yeah, yeah, I'd like to see them. Just to maybe finish things up first though, once the war [ended] you headed back to the Mainland.

SL: Yes. That sort of depleted the meeting of its young people, or at least six or more of us who all went about the same time. And from then on I was sort of only distantly connected with the meeting. Because after finishing my doctorate, I stayed to teach in colleges in the East Coast. Came back at least once every ten years to meet with the East-West Philosophers Conference, which is held every ten years, starting with 1939, 1949, 1959. . . . And I went to those. And then along with that there'd be courses in the summer school with the people who came to the conference teaching courses, outstanding philosophers from around the world.

JR: And then, how long did you stay on the Mainland?

SL: Until 1965, when I decided to retire at the age fifty. And I was given a scholarship to travel and study in the Orient for a year. So I brought my family back here then and put them up in a little cement building just opposite the Wai'oli Tea Room, which was an old telephone exchange building and had been vacated. It was up for sale and I bought it and fixed it over so that the family could live in it while I was away for almost a year. And then when I got back from---I was meditating mostly in monasteries and talking with leading Buddhists. When I got back I found out my wife had arranged for us to stay at the meeting house as residents of the meeting house, with three children in the family. It's the only time there's ever been children in the meeting house, I think.

(Laughter)

SL: And at that time I could carry on the study of Japanese at the university while she took care of the meeting house. I thought then that I'd spend the rest of my life studying and writing books, but one of the Quakers said—he made it clear that I couldn't just bring up a family in that building, I'd have to get a real house. And so I bought this house. That meant that I had to go back and earn some money. And so I went to library school, got my library degree, and went to be librarian at Honolulu Community College till 1980.

JR: So how many degrees do you have? (Chuckles) It sounds like you have quite a few.

SL: Oh no, not really. I have the PhD in philosophy at Cornell, and the master of library studies, besides a BA. That's all.

JR: What did you finally get your BA in?

SL: Science.

JR: Science. Even though you were studying the philosophy and the . . .

SL: Yeah, I was studying philosophy and all that, but my credits had accumulated mostly in science. They didn't have a major like physics and math here, it was just a science major. So you had to have three or four different sciences. So I had to, in my last year, take chemistry, and biology, and botany, and things like that to fill in all the different sciences that were required.

JR: And now you're still at the UH. (Chuckles) You're still taking classes.

SL: I'm taking classes now in Hawaiian history, because I'm trying to write a play about the overthrow of the monarchy a hundred years ago.

JR: Oh, you are?

SL: And I need inspiration.

(Laughter)

SL: I've a course with Haunani Trask. I took it deliberately to try to get some of her—what do

you call it—nationalism or whatever. She's very strong on it. But I haven't been able to absorb it. I'm just trying the best I can.

JR: Well, you've seen a lot of changes here in Mānoa.

SL: Yeah. For one thing though, Mānoa has tried to keep itself away from some of the commercialization. It's creeping in, but you'll notice it's trying to avoid changes. And I have pictures of what Mānoa was like when I was building the house.

JR: What was it like?

SL: You could look up the mountains and not see any houses on the ridges.

JR: And today. . . .

(Laughter)

JR: Today it's all houses.

SL: Yeah. That Lowrey Avenue was practically the limit of the development. There was some over on—Woodlawn was developed already, but the rest of the valley, on this side, was still in little farms and vacant land.

JR: One thing I remember hearing is that after the Pearl Harbor attack a lot of the people who were living in Mānoa left, and there was kind of a—it was a buyer's market at that time.

SL: Right. That's just the time I sold my house.

(Laughter)

SL: Because I was leaving and the market just dropped out and so I didn't get a very good price. And then after that, of course, it soared again. But one of the things I should mention, I suppose, about Mānoa is that prior to Pearl Harbor, Mānoa was a *Haole* valley. Only one family was Japanese. Now it's the other way around.

JR: When do you think that the shift started taking place?

SL: Well, about the time of statehood, I think.

JR: Yeah?

SL: The Japanese got influential both politically and economically, and they could afford to buy homes here. And so once they started, then the *Haoles* started to move somewhere else like Kāhala and sold out to the Japanese. But I don't care. I mean, there shouldn't be any exclusive racial segregation in housing.

JR: When you were living here back then though, did you sense that there was some segregation? Or was it coincidence that there . . .

SL: It was personal. It was intentional to keep Japanese out as much as you could. I think, yeah, race mixtures hadn't been as common as they became later. In fact, when I was living up in the valley, about 1945, a *Life* magazine reporter and photographer came around and took our picture, a family picture, as an example of interracial marriage in Hawai'i. It's in a 1946 issue of *Life* magazine.

JR: Oh, it is? All right. Do you remember---okay, I'll have to . . .

SL: I might have a copy of that around. I doubt it.

JR: Well, I'm sure they have it at the library.

SL: But he was such a nice man, too. Really got interested in me personally.

JR: Well, you know, you mentioned the 'Iolani School incident. Now, 'Iolani had a lot of Chinese students there too, right?

SL: Mostly *Haole*. When I was teaching there—I was teaching English also, and one of my jobs was to interview prospective students. And the headmaster said, "Now, we're going to be very strict about their English requirement. If they don't speak good English, we won't have them." And that was their only way of excluding Orientals. But that obviously was with the intention of excluding Orientals. And I accepted this Japanese student because he was so good in English, but at that time they were trying to make a very high standard for the Japanese if they would want to enter. We did have several Chinese students who came from China who weren't so good in English, but they were kind of missionary—I mean, the idea was to bring over Chinese to help them in English. Because it was Sun Yat-sen, you see, who came to 'Iolani School and learned his English here. So we had about ten or a dozen Chinese students from China, whom I loved very much, so nice.

JR: But overall, what was the mixture back then do you think?

SL: Well, we had some Hawaiian students, some of the very highest ranking Hawaiians, which was part of our purpose with a mission school. We were missionaries really. We were paid like missionaries, too.

(Laughter)

SL: Seventy-five dollars a month, plus board and room. But that actually amounted to the equivalent of what you get in a public school for teaching, because of board and room. But no, we didn't have more than 10 percent Orientals.

JR: What about when you were a student at the university?

SL: Same thing. Maybe it would be a higher percentage because of the eagerness of the Japanese to get their children into a university. But in those days at the university, the *Haoles* were the minority, I'd say about 30 percent *Haoles*. But I do remember only one Filipino student in the whole student body. And we had one student from India, a few Hawaiians.

JR: One of the things I've read is that during the war the enrollment took a nosedive at the university. Did you . . .

SL: Yes, right.

JR: . . . observe any . . .

SL: Because of the exodus of the students for the war. It was really drastic.

JR: Was it difficult---I mean, were the classes also cut back because there weren't as many students? Was it hard to get certain subjects?

SL: I don't think so. I didn't notice any cutback in classes. See, I was here as a student—I mean, my senior year—so I think men students. . . . That was, of course, long before the war. And during the war, I was working outside. But part of the time I was attending classes, but they were graduate classes, mostly graduate students. That's very few.

(Pause)

I enjoyed my work at the reserve room in the library, because all the students would come to me, you see, for help, and I felt I was really able to do something for them. I enjoyed that life. Felt I could go on forever.

(Laughter)

SL: And I didn't get to tell you, personally, that in 1941, Tom Kelly died. His heart broke. I mean, he burst an aorta in his heart. He was only forty-seven or forty-nine years old. He just put so much of his energy and strength into teaching that it was too much for him I think. So news came to me while I was living on Vancouver Avenue, Ann Satterthwaite's house, and I said, "This means I must go and try to take his place," as much as I could, and teach philosophy. So that changed my life. (Pause) I think that's how it happened.

(Laughter)

SL: I remember the very moment when I decided I would give my life to try to do something of what he had done.

END OF INTERVIEW

AN ERA OF CHANGE

Oral Histories of Civilians in World War II Hawai'i

Volume I

**Center for Oral History
Social Science Research Institute
University of Hawai'i at Mānoa**

April 1994